

Resilience Project Update 3rd August, 2010

The Injury Control Council of WA's (ICCWA) *Resilience Project* in the South West Region of WA recently completed a National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) funded period. This was the third and final phase of funding to this Project from the Department of Health and Ageing since 2005 and ICCWA is very grateful to the Department for its support over these years. The NSPS however, continues to fund ICCWA's *Healing through the Map Project* until June 2011.

The Project has come a long way since its inception in 2003 when a dedicated group of agency representatives and community members formed a taskforce in response to a cluster of suicide deaths in the region. The South West Suicide Prevention Taskforce initiated the idea of building resilience in communities to prevent suicide. This theme ran through the Project at several levels and the Project continues to benefit from the ongoing support and guidance of the multi-agency South West Resilience Reference Group.

The extensive achievements of the *Resilience Project* were recognised nationally when ICCWA was awarded the Suicide Prevention Australia LIFE Award under the Healthy Communities category in September 2009. So much has been achieved since the original NSPS funding was provided for action research with communities in 2005 and the initial phase of project implementation commencing early 2007. Some significant outcomes include –

Community Action Plans (CAPs). Community Action Plans (CAPs) were developed in collaboration with local stakeholders and community members in Bunbury, Busselton, Margaret River, Collie, Bridgetown and Manjimup.

Service Gaps and Access Issues. Working groups identified and prioritised issues and worked collaboratively to address service gaps and improve access to existing services. Strategies have varied from lobbying Shires or service providers, writing letters of support for funding applications, to capacity building activities such as the provision of advocacy workshops. Many successful outcomes occurred and are outlined in the Final Reports. Ongoing discussions and advocacy continues to occur between services and key stakeholders as part of the role of the established interagency networks in the region.

Connecting to Community. Working groups identified and supported many varied activities that provided opportunities for people to connect with their community and promote social inclusion. These included: community forums and expos, such as the Rotary Community Mental Health Forum and Mental Health Week ; support for community programs and events; promotion of community education programs, such as LAMP Inc.'s psycho-education program; provision of Aboriginal cultural

safety training; and promotion of Mentally Healthy WA's Act-Belong-Commit message at community events.

Referral, Networks and Help Seeking, to build community capacity for help seeking by increasing awareness and knowledge of referral pathways and support services. Varying strategies were employed to achieve outcomes including: use of local media to promote services; collaboration with local Business and Community Directories to include crisis and help lines and update support services; distribution of adapted, quality resources; numerous community expos and forums; and promotion of inter-agency networking (three new networks initiated).

Resilience Building through the provision of education, training and skill development to build the capacity of communities to recognise and respond appropriately to people at risk of suicide and to raise awareness of how to build resilience. Various packages which were made available by sub-contracting training and/ or working in partnership with other organisations and community groups.

- MindFrame National Media Initiative stakeholder workshops (30 participants) and media briefings www.mindframe-media.info/
- "A Way Through" Interactive Community Information Sessions (633 participants) and workshops (68 participants) www.wisdominyourlife.com.au
- Gay and Lesbian Community Services Opening Closets workshop (80 participants) www.openingclosets.com
- Telethon Institute for Child Health Research Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Workshops (373 participants) www.mcsp.org.au
- 7 Gatekeeper Trainers from across sectors trained and accredited to continue workshops in the region.
- Lifeline WA Livingworks education (54+ participants) www.livingworks.org.au
- Other community initiatives
- One Drug and Alcohol counsellor from SW Community Drug Service Team trained as Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid presenter

Throughout the course of the *Resilience Project* – local, regional, state and national collaborations have occurred. Strong alliances and partnerships have been developed and maintained. For example, in the most recent nine months of NSPS funding, the Resilience Project staff worked directly with at least 37 different organisations in the region on various strategies and events. The wide ranging outcomes could not have achieved without this valuable input from stakeholders.

Current Status

Currently, *Resilience Project* staff are being retained by ICCWA until December 2010 to continue to work with local communities, agency networks and working groups on Community Action Plans while investigating further funding options as a priority. Staff will also continue to coordinate Gatekeeper Workshops and progress Livingworks suicide prevention training in the region. Having attended the [For further information about the Project model and outcomes, please refer to the ICCWA web site www.iccwa.org.au](http://www.iccwa.org.au)

Livingworks ASIST training for trainers, ICCWA's *Resilience Project* Officers are now working towards achieving accreditation. This will enable them to provide the two-day ASIST suicide prevention workshops as well as the shorter Livingworks suicideTALK presentations to community members, work sites and agencies. As ICCWA is no longer funded to deliver free training as part of the Resilience Project, ICCWA will need to charge for any training it now delivers to enable ICCWA to cover the cost of training delivery.

While ICCWA is very grateful for the funding it has received through the NSPS since 2005, it will be disappointing to see the loss of this valuable suicide prevention project to the south west region of WA, and views the securing of additional funding as an absolute priority.

1. There is a risk of losing the low cost, locally provided Gatekeeper workshops in the region. ICCWA has been coordinating these well attended workshops and currently no agency has the capacity to take this on. Without this support, the seven Gatekeeper instructors trained through the Resilience Project will find it very difficult to maintain accreditation.
2. Currently five communities of Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Bridgetown and Manjimup have current action plans. Without project officers to drive and support these, there is real risk that these will not be continued and the efforts over the last few years will be lost.
3. Throughout the life of the *Resilience Project*, developing and maintaining local, as well as state-wide partnerships has been vital in providing support towards achieving suicide prevention outcomes. Valuable and effective collaboration has occurred with over forty key stakeholders in the region. Extensive collaboration and partnering has occurred with other major stakeholders for suicide prevention at the State and National level.

WA State Suicide Prevention Strategy

ICCWA has welcomed the commitment from the WA State Government of \$13m towards suicide prevention efforts across WA. In response to the recent appointment of Centrecare as the agency coordinating the implementation of the Strategy, a meeting was recently held with Centrecare to discuss how ICCWA could be involved in the roll-out, given our experience in community action planning over the last few years.

Support for project continuation in the South West

ICCWA has recently received numerous letters of support from many of stakeholders across the South West to advocate for the continuation of the *Resilience Project* and the ICCWA Board and staff are extremely grateful for this support. ICCWA is committed to continuing its work to assist communities in implementing local suicide prevention strategies, building community resilience and driving intersectorial action for suicide prevention in the south west region, however additional funding is required to maintain this award winning program.



Please do not hesitate to contact one of project staff below to get more information about how you or your agency may be able to offer your support and assistance to the South West Resilience Project.

PROJECT CONTACTS

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EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If you or anyone you know is at risk of suicide, please contact one of the following help lines.

Lifeline	13 11 14
Men’s Help Line	1300 78 99 78
Kids Help Line	1800 55 1800